

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

**PRESS RELEASE: Committee to Defend Xolani Khoza calls for protest on September 27, Mbombela courthouse**

21 SEPTEMBER 2024—Preparations are in full swing for a mass protest on the morning of Friday, September 27, when Xolani Khoza's trial begins in Mbombela. Khoza, a member of the Economic Freedom Fighters, is facing charges that include incitement to commit terrorism, public violence and intimidation. He is being charged, under the apartheid-era Riotous Assemblies Act of 1965 and the Cybercrimes Act of 2020, for posting a TikTok video calling for protest against the Government of National Unity and the removal of Cyril Ramaphosa as president. He was arrested in June by the Hawks, shortly after the conclusion of a SACCAWU strike at Spar in which Khoza played a prominent role. Since his release on bail in June, Khoza has been banned from posting or using social media as a condition of his bail.

The protest is demanding: "Drop the Charges Against Xolani Khoza, Now! Down With the Social Media Ban and State Surveillance!" It has been initiated by the Committee to Defend Xolani Khoza, which was formed by the Economic Freedom Fighters of Ward 29, Enhlanzeni Region, and Spartacist/South Africa. These organisations held a protest at Khoza's last court hearing, on September 2, when the prosecution requested a postponement of the trial until September 27.

In mobilising for the protest, the Committee is emphasising the shared interest of all who face austerity and attacks from the GNU in uniting to oppose the persecution of Khoza. In a letter on behalf of the Committee, Dinopolo Tladi of Spartacist/South Africa wrote:

"Trade unionists, student organisations, radical nationalists, socialists: This is an attack on all of us. Xolani's persecution is a blatant assault on freedom of speech which threatens to brand any who would resist the attacks of the GNU as 'terrorists'. We need to fight this!"

The EFF's Tonny Velly Nkosi stressed:

"We will fight and we will continue to fight until Xolani Khoza is free. There is no police, no court of law, no Hawks or any form of intimidation that will stop us to fight this kind of oppression. Because what we want is freedom of expression. Amandla! Aluta continua!"

The Committee is calling on all organisations that agree with the demands, irrespective of any political disagreements, to endorse the protest and help build it. As Dinopolo's letter stressed, "The only reliable force that can bring justice for Xolani is ***mobilisation of the masses***. ... A united front is the best way to mobilise a powerful, united effort to press for justice for Xolani, including contingents from trade unions, the campuses and the community." The protest has already been endorsed by local SACCAWU organisers and shop stewards, and it is expected that other union representatives will add their endorsements soon.

The media, and any others who want more information about the protest, can call the Committee to Defend Xolani Khoza at 064 774 4665 or 073 275 4327.

Attachment: Letter to trade unions, student organisations, socialists, 18 September 2024.